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THE
CHURCHMAN'S PROTEST;
OR,
PLAIN REASONS OF A PLAIN MAN
AGAINST
THE OBJECTS AND PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
LAY ASSOCIATION
IN THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC.

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PREFACE.

So small has been the part taken hitherto by the Laity in general in the affairs of the Church of England, in this Diocese, and so imperfect has been the knowledge of her distinctive principles, that many well-meaning Churchmen are perhaps disposed at first sight to welcome, with all their heart, a Society whose professed object it is to awaken the Laity to a sense of their duties and responsibilities, and to promote the "interchange of sentiment and experience in matters falling within the range of Synodical legislation." Convinced in his own mind that the Church of England Lay Association, though it may seem to supply a deficiency now beginning to be strongly felt, is nevertheless under its present constitution and with its present objects, unsound, dangerous and revolutionary, the writer ventures to offer the following "Plain Reasons" to the unprejudiced consideration of the members of the Church at large in the Diocese of Quebec, in the hope that they may be deterred from committing themselves, under the idea that they are doing God and the Church service, to a party with whose real designs he believes that they have little or no sympathy.

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THE CHURCHMAN'S PROTEST.

I protest against the objects and proceedings of the Lay Association,—

I. Because its whole constitution and character is inconsistent with the principles of the Church of England as hitherto understood, and indeed of the Church of Christ in all ages: especially with the lawful and inherent authority of Bishops, as set forth in Holy Scripture, and in the Canons and practice of our Mother Church, and of those branches which have been already organized in the Colonies.

II. Because the Bishop is the centre of unity to every diocese; and every course of action which tends to undermine the legitimate influence of the Bishop, and to spread abroad suspicion and distrust of his acts and motives is an assault upon the best interests of the Church, and repugnant to the feelings of all sincere Churchmen.

III. Because, even setting aside the question of the Bishop's rights, I totally disapprove of a league formed within the communion to which I belong, apart from

the Clergy who are set over us in the Lord ; and much more when its object is to make a breach between the people of the Church and their pastors.

IV. Because the persons who take the lead in this Association, and who put themselves forward as the Champions of the Laity throughout the Diocese, are the same men who strained every nerve and used every art to prevent the passage of the Bill for equalizing the rights of the different congregations in the Diocese; which rights would otherwise have been wholly swallowed up by a promiscuous assembly of citizens in Quebec, whose real claims to Churchmembership no steps had been taken to ascertain.

V. Because the sense of the country has spoken out clearly and strongly against the manifest injustice of this effort on the part of the leaders of the Lay Association—the whole of the Legislative Council, and a majority of 72 to 7 in the Legislative Assembly, having pronounced in favour of the above-mentioned Bill for equalizing the rights of the Diocese, and not one Churchman in either house having voted against it; and that notwithstanding the public meeting and numerous signed petition of the Association, and the efforts of their paid delegate to the Seat of Government, an eminent and influential lawyer.

VI. Because the proceedings of the opposition party at the Synodical meeting of the 24th of June last, and their subsequent attempts to promote and carry out their views by the formation of the Lay Association, by letters and leading articles in the newspapers, and by industriously spreading about unfounded and mischiev-

ous reports, must make it clear to all thinking men, that a safeguard is needed against irregular and ill-considered movements in the Church; and this safeguard can in no way be better provided than by requiring the consent of each of the three orders composing the Synod to any proposed course of action; the necessity for which joint concurrence it is one of the objects of the Lay Association to do away with.

VII. Because if there were anything that could justify the proceedings of the Lay Association, there is no pretence for it whatever in the circumstances of the present case.

VIII. Because it was from the Bishops in the first instance that the whole movement for procuring Synodical action proceeded, so that the Laity owe to them their right of sitting in Synod at all; and therefore to accuse the Bishops of attempting to take away the rights of the Laity is a charge too absurd to be believed.

IX. Because to say the least, it is a very ungracious return for the Laity to make to the Bishops, who have procured for them a controlling voice in the government of the Church, that they should endeavour to deprive them of that limited portion of power which they have retained, and thus in point of fact to effect a complete revolution in the Church.

X. Because it is a main aim and purpose of the Lay Association, to shut out from the proposed constitution of the Synod several right principles of great importance to the unity and stability of the Church, and in their room to introduce what is unsound and objectionable; and in particular to prevent the recognition of the prin-

ciple that nothing should become a law of the Synod without the consent as well of the Bishop (which they call "the Episcopal veto") as of the Clergy and Laity; whereas there is not a single example of the constitution of a Synod without this fundamental principle, either in the North American Dioceses, or in the whole extent of the British Empire, where Synods have been multiplying from year to year, nor under the like circumstances in the whole history of the world since the foundation of the Christian Church.

XI. Because the principles which the Lay Association are striving to establish, viz: that any and every proposed measure may become a law of the Synod without the consent of the Bishop, appears to me irreconcilable with the principles of Episcopal Church government, inasmuch as it reduces the Bishop from his position of lawful authority to that of a mere instrument to carry out the decisions of a body of Clergy and Laity.

XII. Because the word "veto," which it has been industriously endeavoured to fasten upon the exercise of the Bishop's co-ordinate authority is an unfair one, and calculated to convey ideas very wide of the mark; inasmuch as the Synod consists of three orders, any one of which would have the same *veto* upon either or both of the other, the concurrence of all three being necessary to every act of legislation within the body; so that the Lay Representatives have the same *veto* upon the Bishop and Clergy that either the Bishop and Clergy or both together have upon the Lay Representatives.

XIII. Because the examples of our own Church are rather to be followed by us than those of the same communion in the United States, especially when the extraordinary circumstances of disadvantage are considered, under which the Episcopate was introduced into that country.

XIV. Because the permissive Act (19 and 20 Vict. c. 141,) which relieves the Church of England within this Province of any doubts respecting the legality of Synodical assemblies of her Communion, as it cannot have been intended to disturb the original constitution and standing principles of the Episcopal Church of England, so does not fail to recognize by formal and separate enumeration the three distinct orders of Bishop, Clergy and Laity, as the parties for whom the provisions of the Act are framed.

XV. Because it was under our Bishop while he had the whole government of the Church exclusively in his hands, and mainly through his instrumentality (with God's blessing) that Upper Canada first, and afterwards the District of Montreal were erected into separate Dioceses, that the Missions of the Church have been largely extended, that the Church Society has been formed and incorporated, that the Church Temporalities' Act has been passed, that a College has been founded and raised to the rank of an University; and that notwithstanding many hard struggles and discouragements, these institutions and provisions have been undeniably blessed for the spiritual improvement of a people left otherwise unprovided.

XV. Because the government of the Church of England in this Diocese ever since the first establishment of the See of Quebec in 1793, during which period all the power and authority were exclusively in the hands of the successive Bishops, has been administered in a manner to deserve the confidence of her people, and the Church has been kept true to her calling as a witness to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and clear of all extremes and dangerous tendencies in religion; and there can therefore be no pretence of reason for depriving the Bishop at this time of all share in the act and decisions of the Synod.

XVII. And, finally, Because the Lay Association in stirring up the Laity against the Bishop and Clergy are employing the most effectual means of causing divisions and offences amongst us; and the Word of God not only requires me to "obey them that have the rule over me and watch for my soul," (Heb. xiii. 17,) but also bids me "mark them which cause divisions and offences, and avoid them." (Rom. xvi. 17.)

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